The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

DECEMBER 1948

Christ Above All

By HOOVER RUPERT

Between Alpha and Omega

By STANLEY I. STUBER

Our Protestant Witness

By ROLAND H. BAINTON

Real Religion

By HOMER J. ARMSTRONG

The Wonder of Jesus

By ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

God So Loved the World

By FRED ZIMMERMAN

What Shall We Sing for Christmas?

By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the January Pulpit

One of the leading features of the January Pulpit will be a new sermon by John Sutherland Bonnell, widely known minister of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. The sermon, "I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church," contains one of the finest discussions of Catholic-Protestant relations to appear in some time. Dr. Bonnell, who has just returned from a trip to Spain, has some things to say about the situation there that should be of interest to every reader of the Pulpit.

Other sermons will include one entitled "Landmarks of the Way to God," by Merrill R. Abbey, pastor of the First-University Methodist Church, Madison, Wisconsin, an unusually fine discussion based on the life and trials of Jacob; a radio address by Frederick Andrew Roblee of First Presbyterian Church, Bay City, Mich., on "God's Plan for Your Life"; and a sermon by Eugene L. Smith of St. Mark's Methodist Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., on "The Joy That Is Set Before You."

The Preacher Problem Department will feature the last in the series of three articles on church music by Chaplain Martin H. Scharlemann and an article by Edwin E. Aubrey, president of Crozier Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa., on "The Preacher's Friends."

Of course there will be the usual features—a children's sermon, a pastoral prayer, a fine selection of illustrations and our newest department which has already become a Pulpit tradition, Speaking of Sermons.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

Rev. Stanley I. Stuber of New York City is director of public relations for the Northern Baptist Convention and head of the world relief activities of that same organization. He is chairman of the Missions Public Relations Office, secretary of the Board of Directors of Church World Service and active in many other inter-denominational groups. Last summer and fall he was in Europe as official observer at the U. N. Assembly for the Baptist World Alliance.

Rev. Ernest Fremont Tittle has been pastor of First Methodist Church in Evanston, Ill., since 1918. He is a trustee of Northwestern University, a member of the World Peace Commission of the Methodist Church and has been a leader in the field of social and industrial betterment for many years.

Rev. Hoover Rupert is director of the youth department of the Methodist Board of Education. A graduate of Baker and Boston universities and the Boston School of Theology, he has engaged in graduate study at Northwestern University, Garrett Biblical Institute and Union Theological Seminary. The sermon appearing in this issue was preached on the Church of the Air, Columbia Broadcasting Company.

Rev. Roland H. Bainton has taught in the department of church history at Yale Divinity School since 1920. Since 1936 he has held the chair of ecclesiastical history there. Among his published works are *Concerning Heritics* and *The Church of Our Fathers.*

Rev. Homer J. Armstrong is minister of Judson Memorial Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn., where he has served since 1941. He is a graduate of Kansas, Drake and Boston universities. He is a member of two commissions of the Federal Council of Churches and at present is vice-president of the Minneapolis ministerial association.

Rev. Fred Zimmerman has been minister of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church, Powhatan Point, Ohio, for five years. He is a graduate of Elmhurst College and Eden Theological Seminary. His sermon which appears in this issue is one of a series which is soon to appear in book form.

Rev. Leslie Conrad, Jr., is pastor of St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Hickory, N. C. He is a graduate of Lenoir Rhyne College and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. His present church is his first pastorate.

Chaplain (Major) Martin H. Scharlemann is a Lutheran pastor. He received his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. A chaplain in the army since 1941, he is at present an instructor at the Army Chaplain School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Rev. Julius Fischbach is minister of the First Baptist Church, Lansing, Mich.

Rev. James H. Bell is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Escanaba, Mich.

Rev. Herbert W. Hahn is minister of the First Methodist Church, Lee, Mass.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THIS PAGE is devoted this month to a single theme, namely, Protestantism. This, I suppose, is due to the fact that for five succesive Sundays, I have been participating in city-wide celebrations of the birthday of the Reformation, and I am writing under the spell of this inspiring experience. It was on October 31, 1517, that Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Wittenburg castle church. The observance of this recurring anniversary is one of the most revealing signs that our churches are becoming conscious of their common Protestantism as a far more significant heritage than that of their separate denominations. The Federal Council, under the leadership of Dr. Jesse M. Bader, has this year actively encouraged the observance of this anniversary. In sixty or seventy cities of the country, united mass meetings have been held. And no doubt innumerable churches have heard sermons by their own pastors on the principles of the Reformation. Our common faith as Protestants should be clearly defined and understood by our churches, and boldly declared before the world. Its relevancy to the religious and social situation was never more pointed than in this generation.

The Birthday of the Reformation

The Book of the Month

CAN PROTESTANTISM WIN AMERICA? *by Charles Clayton Morrison. Harper,* $2.50.

I AM SURE that if some one else had written this book I would choose it as the book of the month for Pulpit readers. The Religious Book Club has adopted it as its book of the month, and so I feel that our readers would be treated unfairly if personal modesty should prevent the doing of my editorial duty! With this rationalization of what may be at bottom nothing but an author's conceit, I shall merely sketch here what this book tries to do. It tries to view Protestantism as a whole, and asks whether it is gaining or losing in its impact on the life of America. Three criteria are set up by which to measure the present Protestant strength. One: quantitative — growth in numbers. Two: qualitative — growth in depth of spiritual zeal, loyalty and understanding. Three: relative — advance in relation to the secular forces which are competing with Christianity for the soul of America. While Protestantism is advancing under number one, it seems clear to me that it is not making progress under two and three. The first section of the book is devoted to an extended analysis of the sources of secularism. The second section is a statement of the Protestant task and a diagnosis of the weaknesses of Protestantism. The third section, constructively envisages an ecumenical Protestantism. Three major forces, the book maintains, are in competition for ascendency in the spiritual and cultural life of this country—Protestantism, Catholicism and Secularism. If Protestantism continues in its sectarian inertia, America's culture is destined to be either secular or Roman Catholic, with the odds in favor of the Roman church. The book tries to be realistic, and it does not shrink from sounding an alarm.

A Thought for the Month

PROTESTANTISM is compelled to think in categories that are too small to express either the richness or the power of the Christian faith. How could it be otherwise when it is dispersed among so many sects, each operating as an autonomous self-sufficient ecclesiastical body? The denominational mind is necessarily provincial. It cannot rise to the eminence from which alone the whole field of the church's mission can be surveyed as a field of Christian action. However earnestly our denominations may try to think in terms of the ecumenical task, their impulse to action is inhibited by the consciousness that there is so little we can do about it as separate groups. Our inhibitions are reinforced by the growing indifference of the world toward our denominations. It is more than indifference. The common sense mind of our time holds our denominations in ill-concealed contempt. This is illustrated in the attitude of the secular press toward Protestantism. I venture to say that in the recent celebrations of Reformation Day, it was a rare city in which the newspapers treated the event as they would have treated a similar event under Roman Catholic auspices. Would it not be salutary for us Protestants to see ourselves as others see us? The attitude of the modern mind is not going to change. Protestantism must do the changing. We have reached the point where the ecumenical ideal must be taken seriously. This ideal has hovered over us and haunted us for a long time. Its imperative has been acknowledged, but only with stiff sectarian reservations. These reservations must be uprooted and discarded. Only if Protestantism presents itself as a united whole can it match the powerful forces with which it must wrestle in the world of today.

Our Handicapped Protestantism

Charles Clayton Morrison

Christ Above All

By HOOVER RUPERT

Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. Phil. 2:9.

IF YOU were systematically to destroy nine out of ten buildings in the entire city of Detroit, or Cleveland, or Los Angeles, and then survey the damage, you would be looking at the sight that greeted the visitor to Warsaw, Poland, at the close of World War II. As far as the eye could see there were only huge piles of debris, jagged fragments of walls and endless mountains of brick and mortar. Yet in the heart of war-destroyed Warsaw, rising above its ruins and rubble, I saw a marble statue of Jesus Christ. It stood there at the center of one of the most completely destroyed cities of all time. Looking at the gleaming black marbled beauty of this statue, I thought: "Can it be that here is a silent but moving symbol which says that even in the midst of the disaster wrought by man's inhumanity to man, Christ is above all?"

A FACT OF FAITH—AND OF HISTORY

This is a fact of history even as it is a fact of faith. Jesus Christ is above all. He stands above the wreckage and debris of the ages as the one constructive fact in a destroyed world. The one force that has withstood the onslaught of time and evil is this Christ of whom the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

We do not always realize this and many times we have not looked up to see Christ on the horizon of our own lives. But our indifference and neglect do not change the eternal reality of the supremacy of Jesus. Before the war a young German lad who had been trained by nazi party methods was being counseled by his father. The father urged the son not to give up his Christian faith and principles. The boy's answer was this: "Adolf Hitler has become so big and Jesus Christ has become so small!" Recent history has shown the blight in the mind of this misguided youth. To be sure, there are many things that can blot out the bigness of Christ for our lives, but he remains the Christ above all, in spite of our neglect.

There are those who say Jesus is out of date. They are attracted by his spirit, but give it only fleeting attention. A good idea, they say, but so unrealistic. "You cannot make real the spirit and attitude of the carpenter of Nazareth in this work-a-day world where you must look out for yourself or you lose out." Well, one must recognize that Jesus lived in a different day than ours. His was a simple age; ours is complex. And it is a bit difficult to get too specific in applying the standard, "What would Jesus do?" However, Jesus did far more than set up a discipline of spiritual exercises which would give us the mechanical answers in any given situation. He set the Christian standards and patterns through his attitudes and his spirit. Through our efforts to learn the mind of Christ, we seek to follow the way of life he lived, not in detailed physical imitation, but in the imitation of his Christlike spirit. And that spirit is as up to date as the headlines on your Sunday paper. It is as realistic as any philosophy of life to which some may give adherence.

HE HAS "JUST BEGUN TO LIVE"

In that moving drama of the crucifixion of Jesus, *The Terrible Meek,* by Charles Rann Kennedy, the author has the mother say to the Roman centurion at the foot of the cross: "But he's dead now. He is gone now. There's his body hanging up there!" To this the centurion replies: "No, lady, he's not dead. He's not gone. Lady, we hung a man up there tonight who will never die. He's just begun to live, lady." Yes, he has just begun! And nineteen centuries of Christian history have verified these words. Christ lives wherever there are those who live according to the Christlike spirit. And his spirit deals with life right where we live in the daily routine of life.

For example, the Christlike spirit is the attitude of adherence to truth and right. Once truth was revealed to Jesus and its implications for right made clear in his mind, there could be no deviation or compromise—even if it drove him to the cross. Such a spirit is scientifically acceptable, intellectually respectable and eternally essential.

UNSELFISH LOVE IN ACTION

Moreover, the Christlike spirit is one of unselfish love in action. Love, for Jesus, was the normal relationship of constructive good will for all men. Unselfishness was a governing attitude in his life which recognized that the life that shares is the only effective one. This is the spirit that alone can produce permanent peace in our world. When we clothe our statesmanship with the spiritual garment of unselfishness and good will, we have made a tremendous step toward peaceful foreign relations.

The Christlike spirit is one of quiet humility. Again, this is not to be regarded as a weak sentimentalism with which so often Jesus is identified. This is a strength of character which enables one to achieve greatness through humility and unselfishness. While such a spirit may bring poverty and suffering

and even death to its adherent, it produces an integrity that brings inner strength and power.

When we put Christ above all, we accept this Christlike spirit, and through its transforming power we discover life that is effective in Christian living.

A good many of us are guilty of the sin of nominal Christianity. We almost get there, but never quite make it. Someone has analyzed his own weakness at this point by saying: "I used to be comparatively pure, relatively honest, intermittently unselfish, and approximately loving." To this kind of "approximate" Christianity comes the constantly impelling challenge of the goodness and moral purity of the Christ. And that challenge urges us to let his life of goodness become contagious in and through us.

There is something immortal about that kind of contagion. Who can measure the influence of the shadows cast by our lives on the lives of others? Do you remember that scene in Lloyd Douglas' masterful book *The Robe,* where Marcellus comes to Arpino after his conversion to Christianity? In this village of melon growers he tells the villagers each evening the stories of Jesus. Each day the workers see in Marcellus the kind of life Christ called his followers to live. And when he leaves the village, he discovers that a great change has come silently in the life of its people because of the contagious influence of Christ as it works through the life of a devoted follower.

CHRISTIANS IN A DARK WORLD

The moral chaos of our time can be overcome only by the contagion of Christian influence. One does not need to call attention to the rapid decline in the moral levels of our time and the corresponding increase in delinquency—both juvenile and adult. The situation is ripe for response on the part of those of us who are willing to take Jesus seriously, both from the standpoint of his moral example and the moral imperative of his teaching. In the second century there appeared a little devotional book entitled *The Epistle of Diognetus.* Though it was not included in our New Testament, it breathed the Christian spirit. One line of this book read, "It is the Christians that hold the world together." Nowhere is this more true than in the realm of moral living. If we are to be saved from moral bankruptcy it will be because the religious people of the world have been willing to hear the godly challenge to make moral goodness a part of daily living. Such action can become contagious through your life and mine and all with whom we come into contact will at least be exposed.

Every one of us has a governing purpose and a dominant loyalty. Look at your life a moment. What is the most important thing in your life? If we are to accept the words of Paul, we will name the name of Christ above all other names. This to say that his purpose and way will become the ruling passion of our lives. For Christ is above all only when his purpose becomes our purpose.

This means, for one thing, that we allow our faith to motivate us to action. It is a pretty flabby faith that doesn't send us out filled with the purpose to put our faith into action. Christianity for us becomes real only when it ceases to be mere form and becomes a vital force in our lives. Jesus clearly pointed out to many questioners that being Christian is no half-way matter. We must be completely captured by dominant loyalty to Christ and the Christian way, if we are to share the transforming experience of Christian fellowship.

Such a purpose calls for the acceptance of the disciplines of discipleship. Too often we think of Christian faith as being related only to Sundays, when in reality faith is not real until it is lived in the daily routine of life. Most of us think we are too busy to pray. Many of us are too busy to render service for the church and community. No worthy goal was ever achieved without effort. And one doesn't suddenly discover that he has become Christlike in his life. Such a discovery comes only after we learn to put first things first, and have patterned the purpose of our life after the purpose of Jesus.

A TRANSFORMING FELLOWSHIP

This purpose cannot be fulfilled until we accept the responsibility for leading others into this transforming fellowship. The day has passed when we can leave the religious leadership of the church and community solely in the hands of the clergy. If the church is to accept the challenge which faces it in the younger generation of today, it must look to the laymen and laywomen for leadership. What greater way can we build for the future of peace and good will among men than to lend our efforts in molding Christian character in the lives of today's youth? It is a long, slow process. Still, the rewards are abundant. If we are serious about our interest in the boys and girls in our home and in our community, then we will accept the responsibility for doing our share What are you doing in this effort to translate the teachings and way of Jesus into living reality for every youth in your community? That is precisely where your share in this purpose must begin. But before you can render service, you must acknowledge Christ as being above all else in your life.

One rainy and dreary day I left the noisy streets of downtown Copenhagen, Denmark, and walked into the Cathedral of Our Lady. On entering the sanctuary, I found that I was its sole occupant. I started up the long center aisle and saw far ahead what I had come especially to see. It was Thorvaldsen's statue of the Christ. There before me was this great artist's conception of our Christ in startlingly lifelike stone. There was the Christ with arms outstretched, and as I drew nearer I could see the words, "Come Unto Me," at the base of the statue. But I could not see the Master's face until instinctively I knelt at the altar before him. And Christ was above all! We must kneel at his feet and acknowledge him as Lord, before we can look into his face and accept him as Savior.

Between Alpha and Omega

By STANLEY I. STUBER

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Revelation 21:6.

FOR a great many years I was both greatly fascinated and no little perplexed by the book of Revelation, especially with the words "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending". This book was terrifying to me, with all its wild beasts and terrible condemnations, until I learned that the weird language was really in truth a secret code addressed to the persecuted Christians of the first century. The Revelation appeared as a book of hope for the early Christians. It was a message of courage. And, because our present situation is, in many respects, similar to the early Christian era, it has a peculiar message for all earnest Christians.

This message can perhaps be summed up best in the words of our text: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." At a time when Christians were being persecuted, when the State claimed to be the master of the whole of life, when dictatorship was the law of the world, it was good to be reminded that, after all, Christ was the beginning and the end of everything which really mattered.

CHRISTIANITY IS CONFUSED

The trouble today is that even within Christianity itself we have gotten the beginnings and the ends all mixed up. This was true even at the formation of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam where it was necessary to have different communion services. The confusion was reflected in the vastly different points of view of John Foster Dulles, of the U.S.A., and Professor Hromadka of the University of Prague.

When I attended the state funeral of Dr. Benes I was again impressed with this mix-up of the beginnings and the ends. Here, in all the color of their ecclesiastical gowns, were the clergy of Czechoslovakia—both Roman Catholic and Protestant. But here also were 7,000 armed workers from the factories. Here, quite dead, was a peace-loving man who loved, and was beloved, by his people. And here also was President Gottwald, very much alive, with a heavily armed body-guard. Did this service, which was more of a military display than a funeral, represent a beginning or an end? It was certainly hard to judge. Was it the end of Benes, and the beginning of Gottwald? The behavior of the people who expressed their grief freely, particularly the day before at the Memorial of Liberation, seemed to indicate that the spirit of Benes will live on—in spite of all the evil that the present government can do. The end may, in this case, be just the beginning.

God is the Creator. He is at the beginning of things. He is also at the end. But what about that *in-between element,* that *long step* between the beginning and the final ending, of which we are so keenly aware today? What about the means to the end? And do the materialistic ends justify degrading means?

THE ISSUE IS INVOLVED

The moment we begin to ask such simple questions we get involved in matters of communism and capitalism, East and West, Berlin and Paris, motive and realization. While I am greatly concerned with this whole problem it is not my desire to discuss the present military situation or even American politics. I would, however, like to look at that space between the beginning and the end distinctly from a Christian point of view. For I fear that we Christians have given far too much attention to the garden of Eden, on the one hand, and to death and the glories of Heaven, on the other, than we have to the climb which the Christian pilgrim has to make all the way along through life in order to reach the Golden City. We have neglected far too long the practical, everyday life of the average Christian layman. It is high time that the church begin to place its major emphasis not upon birth or death, but upon living.

While in Florence I was told of the tourist who rushed up and asked, "Is this the place where they finished Savonarola?" It did mark the spot where his body was destroyed. But it also marked the beginning of his world influence.

I had this same feeling in Oxford at the memorial monument of Bishop Latimer, Cranmer and Ridley. The flames consumed their bodies, but they kindled such a blaze that day that the world has never been able to put it out.

Even concerning our Lord, himself, I am bold enough to reverse the usual order and to say that without his *life* (what he said and did), his birth and death would lose much of their eternal significance. In his parables, and by his example, he certainly laid stress on the fact that a man will be judged not by his theology, *but by his life.* Matthew 25 is ample proof of this.

A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

We need a working knowledge of God. We also need to know far more his love. But we surely do not need to spend so much of our time debating the fine points of theology. Not at a time like this! The world now needs not so much a *theory* concerning the power of God as it does a *demonstration* of his

love. It needs practical Christian means to great ends. If creation is to have any real significance, and if heaven is to be in any sense based upon realism, then every Christian must, with Paul, transform theology into an on-going, victorious working faith.

As far as we are concerned right now it is the actual daily struggle that counts. It is the constant faithfulness that matters. We had nothing to do about our creation. And heaven is just beyond our reach. But we do have the present with us, and in that present we must, as Christians, not merely for the sake of our own souls, but for the salvation of the world, run the race, fight the good fight, achieve the victory.

At the Olympic Games, this inscription in large letters at one end of the stadium impressed me.

> The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part.
> The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well."

The essential thing for Christians, is not the matter of escaping hell and finally getting to heaven, it is the way we are behaving now as children of God. What about the condition of our souls? Have we fought a good fight? Have we the quality of character fit for heaven? If I read the New Testament correctly, it would seem that it teaches that the means, as well as the ends, are most important. We shall be judged not by the multitude of our words, but by our Christian action.

That certainly is what the writer of the Revelation is trying to tell us. The important thing is to hold on, to endure, to be true and steadfast until the very end.

RESULTS ARE WHAT COUNT

If we are to be real students of the Word we should note carefully the strong emphasis on the *means* in the last chapter of Revelation. It is made very clear that every man shall be judged according to his works. And those who have a right to the tree of life, and therefore will be able to enter through the gates of the Eternal City, will be those who have kept his commandments. Without the gates will be the moral wrecks of life, and all those who loveth and maketh a lie. Into the Holy City will march those who still have their banners flying; who still press onward toward the high calling which is in Christ Jesus.

When one really gets a firm grip upon this interpretation of Christianity, life takes on new meaning and religion becomes an exciting adventure. We then have work to do—and plenty of it. Not work just for work's sake, nor work to merit salvation, but Christian service of such a nature that will make man worthy of his Creator, and capable of living in a world community of brothers.

Now when we speak of having work to do we do not merely mean the little, every-day deeds of kindness and good will. That is only part of it. The greatest work lies in the area of human well-being and international relationships. Here there is a tremendous job to be done. Means must be created to insure the end of brotherhood. The way must be provided which will lead to justice, to better social and economic conditions, to world peace.

It was my great privilege to be at the birth of the United Nations at San Francisco. I have followed its growth carefully, and actively, through the past few years. I have come to believe in it, in spite of all its so-called weaknesses. In some respects it is the very "weaknesses" which make me value it so much. Behind the arguments there has been, in the various commissions and councils, a solid record of achievement. Given time, and the support it deserves, I have faith to believe that it can serve as the means to a just and lasting world peace.

THE CHURCHES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

It pleased me greatly to have the Amsterdam Assembly give such hearty support to the UN. That is as it should be. The United Nations needs the moral backing of the churches of the world. And the churches need the UN as an instrument of realizing the goal of peace. It is my deep conviction that the more the church can do for the United Nations, the better off both the church and the world will be. Two houses are being built, one the United Nations and the other the World Council of Churches. But I am not so sure about the two different foundations. I hope that each one will have the very same foundation—the solid rock of truth and righteousness; the foundation principles of brotherhood and fundamental freedoms for all.

World peace, justice, brotherhood, education, Church World Service, UNESCO and the like, cannot remain something for the Christian church either to take or leave alone. They are not luxuries. The church is being judged today, both by God and by men by the way it accepts the responsibility of dealing with the immediate social, economic and moral welfare of the people..

Take, for example, the case of the displaced persons. The Protestant churches cannot, without committing a sin against humanity, go on as they have—almost wholly unconcerned with these unfortunates. For here we have the parable of the good Samaritan all over again. The church must not leave this DP problem to the governments, and pass by on the other side. In the name of humanity, in the spirit of the Great Physician, it must move these hundreds of thousands of delayed pilgrims from the misery, degradation and heart-breaking experiences in scores of camps. Here is Europe's worst sore. Here is another opportunity for the church to prove that it truly believes in the worth of human personality, and to justify Christian ends by using healing Christian means. Many are the avenues of Christian service to which we are called today in order to fulfill the commands of Christ. Practical Christianity, in the home, market place, school, government, everywhere, is desperately needed in order to bridge the gap between Alpha and Omega. The world waits for a realistic demonstration of the Christian faith.

What troubles me is that during recent years our

ends have been lowered and narrowed, causing our means to be nationalistic and denominational. This is true of the United Nations and the World Council of Churches. In spite of meeting as world organizations we insist upon our own confessional emphasis. That is why we could not have *one* communion service at Amsterdam.

We are in danger of being so occupied with our own individual problems, which often loom so large, that we fail to comprehend the big events which are so important to us and the world's future.

While waiting in the lobby of a Prague hotel for two associates, I heard a young tourist ask the porter, "What's the festivity about?" The porter answered, "The prepartion for the funeral today." "What funeral, Masarack?" "No, Benes." "Oh," said the young tourist, "I'm sorry; I didn't know that Benes had been sick."

We must be sure, in all our traveling about and in all our international conferences, that we are not losing the point, the big goals, the real vision. We cannot go on fighting for small, petty, individual ends. We must, instead, begin to pool our interests; begin to sacrifice a little bit for higher ground.

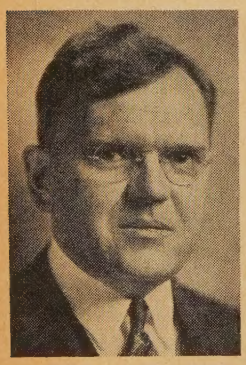
In the church we must strive toward a common communion service, mutual exchange of membership, abolition of the color and class line, larger recognition of the laity and young people, complete financial support of our religious program in all states. These, along with freedom and world peace, should lift our means higher.

This is what we need, not merely to save the world, but also to save the church. Being sons of God, let Christians now demonstrate that they are worthy of the awards which come to those who feed the hungry, visit the prisoners, and heal the sick. Yes, let us have a great Christian demonstration, so great that Christians will be known as those who have done what all others have failed to do—create on earth a brotherhood worthy of heaven. So may our daily prayer, our aim and our work be directed toward helping God realize his Kingdom on earth.

Our Protestant Witness

By ROLAND H. BAINTON

OUR Protestant witness is a Christian witness. To the extent that it is Christian it cannot differ from any other Christian witness. The common element in all branches of the Christian church is our chief concern in this hour when Christianity itself is so challenged and imperiled. The common Christian store should be enriched by combining the best in each rather than impoverished by a reduction to the least common denominator.



The *Protestant* witness entails first of all religious individualism — the assertion that every man must answer to God for himself. No one has said this more strongly than Martin Luther when he said: "In the hour of death, every man must fight his own battle." No one can believe for another, no one can answer for another. One of Luther's followers, who learned this lesson well, when he was on trial for his faith, declared: "I am not answering for Luther. Luther can answer for himself. I am answering for myself."

Such a position may not seem to be peculiarly Protestant. Would not a Catholic say as much? There was a Catholic in Luther's day who did. Sir Thomas More, required by Henry VIII to swear an oath of allegiance to his majesty as head of the church, refused. When condemned and waiting execution, his daughter pleaded with him not to forfeit his life needlessly. Other men whom he respected were finding it possible to reconcile the oath with their consciences. Could it be that he was holding out merely for a scruple? To this Sir Thomas answered: "Dear Margaret, I judge not any other man's conscience, which lies in his heart far out of my sight, but I cannot pin my soul to another man's back. I dare not do it, my own conscience standing against it."

How like are these words of the Catholic martyr to those of the Protestant champion who, when he was urged to compromise and accept the judgement of the pope, answered: "The pope is no judge of matters pertaining to God's word and faith, but the Christian man must examine and judge for himself." More the Catholic, Luther the Protestant—were they not saying the same thing? Not altogether. More was denying the claim of the king and Parliament to determine a man's faith. Luther went further. He was denying the right of the pope to settle the meaning of God's word. Here was an assertion that every single Christian must make up his own mind as to the meaning of the faith. This is a much more radical individualism.

THE BIBLE THE SOURCE BOOK

But it is not an irresponsible individualism, because the second great principle of Protestantism is that the faith must stem from and stand on the Bible. Every man must believe for himself, but he is not at liberty to believe simply what he likes and still call himself a Christian. What he believes must be what Christ believed, what Paul taught, what the Gospel declares.

Here is a certain corrective to sheer individualism. Because the individual in approaching the book, if he

approaches it properly, is not seeking to confirm his prejudices nor to fortify his fancies, but to find out what the book has to say. Undeniably there have been many quarrels as to what the book meant, and great is the temptation to read into it one's own ideas. But if the book be approached reverently, humbly and with a desire to learn, we shall find a corrective to vagaries and a renewal of our common Christian life.

The third great principle of Protestantism is equality. If the book is the starting point and if each must interpret it for himself, then we all stand on one level. In Catholicism there are three levels. The laity, the clergy and the monastics, the monks and nuns. In Catholicism salvation is meditated through the sacraments and only the clergy are in a position to perform the sacraments. The mass is a re-enactment of what God did for us on Calvary. In the mass Christ is sacrificed afresh, the bread and the wine become the substance of the body of God. Through participation in the sacred elements the grace of God is imparted and only the priest can accomplish this miracle.

Protestants take a different view. A very large number would contend that God is present only spiritually on the altar. Others who still believe in the physical presence say, however, that God is present in the flesh, not because of any word of the priest but simply because of the word of Christ. All Christian experience testifies that God is present at the sacred table. How, we do not know. But no word of man is necessary to bring him there and any Christian can preside at the altar.

THE QUESTION OF SUPERIORITY

The Catholic Church makes a distinction between the monastics and other Christians. The "religions," as they are called, are set aside for special tasks—to say prayers for others, to nurse the sick, teach in schools, spread the faith in foreign lands. This is a noble work and those who do it are noble people. But we do not regard them as superior Christians. The Catholic Church, of course does not say that they are necessarily superior. A good layman is better than a bad monk. A layman can be a saint. Sir Thomas More has recently been made Saint Thomas More. Nevertheless the Catholic Church holds that the way of the monk is a superior way because a distinction is drawn not so much between people as between different levels in the commands of Jesus. Some of his precepts, it is said, were meant for everyone. Others of a more rigorous character were intended only for the few. All should refrain from stealing, all should do as they would be done by, but only a special few were enjoined to sell all and give to the poor, when struck to turn the other cheek, to forsake parents, children and wives, Hence the church set aside some to be poor, non-resistant and unmarried, and theirs is in consequence a superior way of life.

Protestants say that all the commands of Jesus were for everybody. No one is excused from higher demands. This does not mean that we are to give away everything. In that case everyone would be poor and in need of relief. The point is that no man has a right to call anything his own. Whatever we have is a trust to be used for ourselves and others according to need. The command to turn the other cheek does not mean that no measures are to be taken when evil men run amok. But it does mean that every Christian must prefer to suffer injury rather than to inflict it. The command to be ready to leave parents, children and wives does not mean that some should promise never to marry. The real point is that God is best served by unqualified loyalty wherever we may be. This is not easy. It is a good deal simpler to practice some of the virtues if one is relieved of many of the responsibilities. But Christianity has real pertinence only if it can be applied and made to work in the midst of everyday life.

The common life is the divine life. All Christians are equal, alike in privilege and in responsibility. The task is thereby harder, the responsibility greater. If every Christian is as surely a Christian as any other, then the decisions as to what the church believes and what the church does are not to be made at denominational headquarters, be it New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Louisville or Rome. They are to be made in our town by you and me.

DIVISIVENESS OF PROTESTANTISM

But will there not then be as many decisions as there are people? Protestantism has been notoriously divisive. One would not call this a principle of Protestantism, but unfortunately divisiveness has been a characteristic. Our virtues have their corresponding vices. Our valid emphases have also their pitfalls. The lengths to which Protestant individualism and separatism can go may be swiftly illustrated by three examples which I mention because they concern three groups with which I have a connection. The first applies to the Congregationalists—I am a Congregational minister. The second is related to the Quakers —I am a member also of the Society of Friends. The third relates to the Baptists—I married a Baptist.

The first is the case of an early Congregational minister, John Smyth by name, who was such an individualist that he objected to reading from any other man's translation of the Scriptures, contending that the translation must be made afresh every time from the originals under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then he went further and objected to using any other man's hymn-book. One should sing alone under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Fortunately he stipulated that only one should do so at a time. Finally he came to the conclusion that no one on earth was qualified to baptize him, so he baptized himself. This is reducing individualism to its lowest possible terms. It is a *reductio ad adsurdum.*

Of a Quaker, the well-known story is told that a Friend said to his wife: "All the world is queer except me and thee, and sometimes I think thee is queer." Of the Baptists an incident may be told which

occurred in my boyhood town in the State of Washington. When the Baptist church structure was completed, the minister wrote to his board saying: "Up to the present we have had in this town a Methodist and a Congregational church, but now we have the only church of the true God north of the Snake river."

These instances make us smile and we are tempted today to condemn utterly the divisiveness and narrowness of certain portions of our Protestant heritage. We do well to recall, however, that the minute separations of Protestantism have served a useful purpose in bringing religious liberty to pass. This great principle did not originate with Protestantism and had to be learned. One would have supposed that it would have been an immediate corollary of the principle that as no one can die for another, no one can believe for another, but every man must stand for himself. Yet the early reformers were actually highly intolerant. When, however, there came to be almost as many sects as there were men, a situation had arisen in which the only alternative to mutual extermination was religious liberty and thereby the lesson was learned.

A UNITED WITNESS TODAY'S NEED

But now that it has been learned, in the United States at least, our minute divisions are no longer in any sense defensible. Now is the time to pull together. This does not mean of course that we shall exclude all diversity. It does not even mean that we should form a single organization. It does mean that we should center on essentials and render there a united witness. The sound principle as to unity and diversity was well voiced by an obscure Lutheran minister, who in all his life did only one thing worthy of remembrance. He formulated in three phrases a valid principle. His slogan was: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in both, charity." Unity, liberty, charity—these are our Protestant pillars.

But there is no point in standing together unless we stand on something and for something. The unity is to be in essentials and the essential is the Gospel. Protestants are sometimes called Evangelicals. Protestantism is above all else a religious revival stemming from the Gospel. Martin Luther rediscovered the Gospel in travail of spirit. He had been taught to think of God as angry and of Christ as angry. He felt himself to be estranged by his sins from his Heavenly Father and from his Master. He did his best to stop sinning that he might present himself before God with a perfect record. But he could never succeed. God is perfect. Man is and remains imperfect. The church taught that some people were even better than they needed to be and their extra credits could be transferred to others. Luther found this teaching imcomprehensible and pernicious. No one has credits. What then? The church held that even if there be no credits forgiveness is possible on the one condition that sins be repented and confessed. Then one can appear before God with a clean slate. But Luther could never be sure that the slate was clean. He would confess for six hours at a stretch and suppose that everything had been remembered, confessed and absolved, only the next day to recall something omitted. He could present neither a perfect record nor a clean slate.

A NEW VIEW OF GOD

In deep distress Luther set himself to the study of the Bible, the source book of our faith. While he was pondering on the twenty-second psalm the light broke. That psalm begins with the words which Christ quoted on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" "What can be the meaning of this?" reflected Luther. "Christ felt as I do, estranged from God. But why? He was not sinful as I am. He had no unremembered sins as I have. The only answer must be that he who was without sin so loved us sinners as to identify himself with us and take to himself the sins of us all and with us share alienation from God." What a new view of Christ is here! The Judge on the last day is also the derelict upon the cross. What a new view of God is here! The God of wrath is also the God of grace. Anger and mercy are fused upon the cross. And what a new view of man is here! For if God so loved the world as to sacrifice his Son why should man be so concerned about himself and his fate instead rather of seeking to know and do the will of God whatever befall?

Let man then approach his Maker, saying: "Father I have sinned in Thy sight. I do not even know how much I have sinned. Forgive all that Thou knowest to be amiss. Help me. I rely not upon myself but upon Thy loving kindness made known in Christ our Lord. Set me upon my feet and use me as Thou wilt." Something like this Luther meant when he said in the words of the Apostle Paul, "The just shall live by faith," not by a perfect record, not by a clean slate, but by humble trust in the God who helps.

If we can come afresh to understand this we shall be able in essentials to stand together, to pull together and to lift together in so dire a time.

A Glorious Opportunity

THE TIME calls for creative Christianity. Preaching and praying are now a heavy responsibility and a glorious opportunity. The war was brought on by words, and war can be averted by the right kind of words. . . . It is the duty of Christians to think and talk in accordance with the teachings of the Christian religion, to abate the consternation and the fear and the hatred in the world today.

RANDOLPH RAY.

WHEN I go down to the grave I can say like many others, "I have finished my day's work, but I cannot say that I have finished my life."

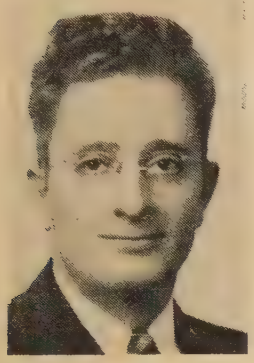
VICTOR HUGO.

Real Religion

By HOMER J. ARMSTRONG

What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Luke 18:18

THE OTHER day I was walking across the campus of a western university and was approached by a student who seemed very anxious to talk about religion. He said to me: "Mr. Armstrong, I wish you would tell me in plain language just what religion is. How does one know when he is religious?"



That is about the way he expressed it. And so, as we walked together, I tried as best I could to make religion understandable and appealing to him. And that is where I would like to begin with you of the radio audience this morning. For I have a feeling that many who are listening to this broadcast, whether members of a church or not, are facing the same dilemma as that of the young man in Seattle.

I think that nearly everyone wants to be religious. Most people are basically hungry for a simple, everyday, workable faith; a religion that will satisfy their deepest needs. I would like to use this opportunity, therefore, to think through with you some of the basic elements in *real* religion.

MAN IS INCURABLY RELIGIOUS

For one thing, we need to remember that religion is normal to human nature. It is the natural thing to be religious. One of our great writers has expressed it this way: "Man is incurably religious." In other words, our spiritual life is not something superimposed upon our nature but rather the development and expanding of a power and a quality already there. I am convinced that some people hesitate to develop a religious life because they feel that religion is unnatural and unbecoming to life—and, consequently, unnecessary. I am also confident that, because of this, many people go through life denying themselves the joys and satisfaction of real religious faith; and what a pity it is!

All about us today are people who sincerely want religion but are not availing themselves of it. They are living "on the edge" of faith, but never quite attaining it; living, as it were, on the fringe of religion, but never entering into the heart of the real thing. This must have been the predicament of that young man in Seattle. He wanted religion, but he didn't know how to get it.

And possibly this may be your dilemma today: so close to God—and yet so far! It reminds me of the story of the country lad who went to town to see his first circus. It seems that on circus day that boy's father had given him a silver dollar and had bidden him to ride his pony nine miles to the county seat town to see the big show. It was just about noon when the boy arrived, and the streets were crowded with hilarious people. Excitement filled the air. The lad tied his pony to a hitching post and ran to the main streets where something wonderful was taking place. Pushing his way through the crowd, he found himself staring at a spectacle unheard of in his experience. There before him, down the main street, came the circus. Such sights he had never seen—camels, horses, ponies and acrobats; elephants, zebras, brass bands and wagon after wagon of wild animals. The boy's eyes filled with wonder and amazement. At last he was actually seeing the circus—so he thought.

HE SAW ONLY THE PARADE!

As the lad stood there, he saw five or six clowns walking at the rear of the procession. One of them, with his hand held out to the crowd, seemed to be coming toward him. And as the big clown passed by, this little boy reached into his overall pocket for his silver dollar and, quick as a flash, dropped it into the waiting hand of the clown. The big fellow bowed in regal splendor and walked on. Minutes later, after the crowd had melted away, the lad went back to his pony and rode home. But it was not until some time afterward that the boy discovered that he had not seen the circus at all. He had seen only the parade! He had missed the real thing. He had confused the parade with the big show itself.

I wonder if this story could be a parable of our own religious experience. Is it possible that some of us have seen only the "procession" of religion—its outward forms—and have never gotten under the "big tent" of real faith?

In the Bible story we heard a few minutes ago, we have the picture of a man whose religious life was in this very predicament. Here was a young man whom most of us would call quite successful. He was wealthy, prominent, a leader among his people. Furthermore, he was of good moral character. We gather that he not only knew the Ten Commandments but he kept them. He was very devout. Yet as he came to Jesus that day and said, "Teacher, what can I do to inherit eternal life?"—we sense that despite all this routine religion he was at heart very unhappy, dissatisfied with himself. He had kept the laws of the people. He was orthodox in his beliefs. He had strictly followed the customs and codes of his race. Yet—there was something lacking in his life. Could it be that, after all, he had been following only the parade?

Among other things, I think religion involves at

least three basic elements, and the first one is this: A religious person is one who has a deep personal trust in God. I am using the word "trust" rather than the word "belief," because it is so easy for one to believe in God and never to trust him. There are relatively few atheists in principle, but many in practice. The best definition I have ever seen of religion is the one given by Donald Hankey, a chaplain who died in the First World War. He said: "Religion is betting your life there is a God." That statement on religion has always meant a lot to me, and I believe it is one you also will appreciate. For religion is not so much what we think or profess. It is mostly what we do!

When many people think of religion they identify it solely with churches and organizations; with rituals, creeds and prayers; with ceremonies and rites. Yet these things do not constitute the essence of religion. To be sure, they are necessary, and they are worth while, but we must remember that they are only the expressions men give to religion. Apart from a great personal trust in God they can be unimportant and futile. But coupled with real faith they can be dynamic and priceless. Genuine religion is first, last and always an attitude of mind and heart; a way of looking at the universe, and at life; a deep inner devotion to what one feels to be the highest and best. It is, as Donald Hankey said, "betting your life there is a God" and organizing one's life around such a faith. This is religion. This is *real* religion!

No doubt this is what the Master meant when he said to the young ruler: "One thing thou lackest." For despite the young man's profession of religion Jesus saw that he had no daring faith in God. While he kept all the outward forms of religion, there was no great faith in him. Perhaps that is why Jesus recommended such a radical cure. But the young man would not have it. You see—he was afraid to "bet his life on God."

MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

First of all, therefore, one must begin with a real faith in God. But he must not stop there. Faith in God is not all there is to religion. The second part is this: what one does with one's life, or making the most of one's personality. A modern writer calls it "being a real person." This is religion, too—what one does with oneself. It is not enough to believe in God and to trust him. One must also make the most of one's life. He must do something glorious with it! In the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus I have a feeling that it was at this point particularly that Jesus had such profound regret for him: the fact that he had not matured and developed in his own personality; wealthy in worldly goods—but bankrupt in soul!

"The central business of every human being," we are told, "is to be a *real* person." And we might add: anyone who neglects himself, his total personality, is not a religious person. He may be pious and deeply devoted to religious things. But if he is failing to make the most of his life, that is a denial of God, and whatever men may think of him, or whatever he may think of himself, he is not altogether religious. For what one thinks of oneself and what one does with oneself is fully as important as what one thinks of God. The two go together. To fail in either is to cancel out the other. This might be a thought for us to conjure with in these uncertain days when we are talking so much about a better world. Can we have a better society unless, and until, we have better persons? After all, we must *be* the kind of world we want!

LIVING FOR SOMETHING BEYOND SELF

But even this is not all there is to religion. There is a third step—and a most important one. For a religious person is not one who has simply a great trust in God and one who is sincerely trying to make the most of his life, but one who also seeks intelligently and sincerely to invest his life in worthy causes and to contribute to worthy enterprises. In other words, to be genuinely religious you and I must live for something beyond ourselves. This fact is stressed in Luke's story of the rich young ruler. For we gather that, in spite of his piety and orthodox habits, this young man was living primarily for himself. Possibly men thought of him as a "good fellow." But perhaps he was good for little, or "good for nothing"! His money, his abilities, his influence and his total life were not counting for much beyond himself.

I am not surprised, therefore, that Jesus challenged this young man to share his life with others, and to come and follow him. There was no other reply. For whenever one gets hold of something bigger and more important than oneself—or, shall I say, when something like that gets hold of him—and dares him to invest his life in it—that, too, is religion. Jesus offered this young man a great opportunity. But he never caught on. He could not let go of himself.

Let us then sum up and say that real religion is: first, a great trust in God; second, a deep respect for oneself; and finally, a willingness to spend one's life in behalf of others, and of God. When you combine these three elements in one life, you have *real religion.*

This was the answer I gave the young man in Seattle, and I share it with you today. Perhaps if I were right there in the room with you, you might say to me: "Well, Mr. Armstrong, if this is religion, where does our Christian faith come in?" And if I could extend this conversation a little longer I think I would add: This *is* our Christian faith. These are the three things most emphasized by Christ. You can classify all his teachings under these three ideas. Our religion, therefore, becomes Christian when it becomes "Christlike"—that is: when we trust the kind of God Jesus revealed; when we follow Christ's pattern for personal living; and when we give ourselves to the same goals that inspired his life and death. There may be other ways of being religious, but there is no other way of being Christian.

The Wonder of Jesus

By ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

THE NEW TESTAMENT lives and moves and has its being in an atmosphere of wonder. There are to begin with the birth-stories in Matthew and Luke, which tell of a child born to humble parents, born in a stable and cradled in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn," a child whose coming is announced by an angel and celebrated by "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The celestial messenger, wonderful to relate, appears to humble shepherds "abiding in the field and keeping watch by night over their flock." These simple folk are "sore afraid." But the angel reassures them: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The shepherds then go to Bethlehem—go "with haste" to "see this thing which is come to pass"; and they return "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they have heard and seen." And soon thereafter, "wisemen from the east," led by a star, come to the place where the young child is, and "fall down and worship him . . . and present unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

THE BIRTH-STORIES ARE SIGNIFICANT

These stories are most significant, any way you look at them. If you regard them not as an historical account of the coming of Jesus but as profound insight into the meaning of his coming set forth in the language of poetry, they are no less significant. They denote the wonder inspired by Jesus in those who first came to know and believe in him.

The feeling of wonder expressed in these birth-stories appears in the New Testament over and over again. As the story unfolds you find people marveling at the things they have seen and heard. There are those who say, "No man ever spoke like this man," and those who exclaim, "We never saw anything like this."

The story moves swiftly to a tragic climax on a skull-shaped hill outside the city gates. But even here the atmosphere is charged with wonder. Nailed to a cross, the victim prays, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And when the dread business is over, the hard-bitten soldier in charge exclaims, "Certainly this man was innocent!" Nor is this the end of the story. There is a shout of triumph: "Christ has been raised from the dead," and a confession of faith: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," and a paean of praise: "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," and a daring prophecy: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Thus the New Testament proclaims the wonder inspired by Jesus in the early Christians. And Jesus, after nineteen centuries, remains an object of wonder. There is something wonderful in the very fact that he has escaped oblivion. What chance, on any human reckoning, did he have to be remembered? A Jew, living in a small and remote province of the Roman empire; an obscure Jew belonging to the peasant class; a man of whom the vast majority of his contemporaries never heard, and who moreover left no written record of anything that he had said or done or dreamed; a man rejected and repudiated by the leaders of his nation and deserted at the last even by his disciples. Out of obscurity he came; and when, an object of hatred and derision, he was put to death on a gallows, it might well have been supposed that into oblivion he would go. But upon the contrary, the name of Jesus, in Emerson's phrase, is "not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world."

YOU CANNOT LEAVE JESUS OUT

You cannot tell the story of music, letters and art, and leave Jesus out. No one else has made so marvelous a contribution to the cultural heritage of the race. And what of his influence in the realm of character? Once, in a discussion of the world's great religious leaders, a Chinese scholar, who himself was not a professed Christian, said concerning Jesus: "He seems to me to have the power to create a more sensitive conscience." Well, when it comes to that, all you need do is to trace to its source any unusual manifestation of human concern for the poor, the suffering, the downtrodden and oppressed. Whence the compassion that moves Father Damien to go to the leper colony on the island of Molokai and there remain as a devoted priest and friend until he dies? Whence the concern that drives Lord Shaftesbury to spend a lifetime in unwearied effort on behalf of exploited women and children in English mills and mines? Whence the magnanimity that leads Abraham Lincoln to say: "With malice toward none, with charity toward all?"

The word spoken by the angel has been fulfilled: "Unto you is born . . . a Saviour." Thanks to the faith, the hope, the moral insight and regenerative power which the coming of Jesus released among

men, countless millions of human lives have been bettered and blessed. People have indeed been saved. They have been saved from debasing lust and enabled to be more than conqueror. They have been saved from inordinate love of self and turned into devoted servants of the community. They have been saved from hopelessness and despair, and given the power to triumph over disaster.

It is no small thing to bring forth among men a new mind, a new heart, a new aim and ambition, a new outlook on life altogether. You can get people to join the church, especially in communities (there are still a few such) where that is regarded as the thing to do. You may even bring large numbers of people into the Christian fold, if you employ the methods of high-pressure salesmanship. But to form in men and women the mind of Christ, so that they come to share his vision and compassion—this is something else again. In view of man's ignorance and stupidity, his bent toward pride and greed and selfishness, and the awful ease with which he can be swept off his feet by the irrational forces of fear and prejudice—in view of all this it is small wonder that the world, nineteen centuries after the coming of Jesus, is still more pagan than Christian. The wonder is that there is now so much in the world that is in accord with the mind of Christ.

IS CHRISTMAS MERELY A HOLIDAY?

This year, as in years past, Christmas for many people will be merely a holiday vaguely associated with the birth of Christ. There will be feasting and revelry, and this in a world where desperate multitudes are hungry and cold. There will be an exchange of gifts, in many cases between people who already have just about everything that anyone could wish, unless it be happiness and inner peace. There will be toys, at least for privileged children—most of them destined to be put in the attic a day or two after Christmas and soon forgotten. Blessed are they who have no attic; for they shall be delivered (perhaps) from that kind of folly.

But not everyone will celebrate Christmas merely as a holiday. Millions will sing "O come let us adore him." Many will say from the heart:

> O holy Child of Bethlehem!
> Descend to us we pray,
> Cast out our sin and enter in,
> Be born in us today.

Yes, and no inconsiderable number will be thinking of things to do in the name of Christ—like the sender of a Christmas card that sets forth the vision of a world in which there shall be "justice and right dealing between men of all races," and contains a prayer for guidance and help in making this world "a world in which children may grow up unafraid." The wonder is that so many people in every race and nation have come to share the vision and compassion of Christ.

Today's world is not prepared to follow the teachings of Jesus. But growing numbers of people are coming to believe that we shall have to follow his teachings if we are to live, and not perish by atomic and bacteriological warfare. Even professional soldiers are coming to recognize the truth that "they who take the sword will perish by the sword," and are saying that our one hope of security is in political measures designed to remove fear and to promote mutual confidence and trust among nations. Even people not strongly inclined to altruism are coming to recognize that the law "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is binding on all men and all nations. Even the sponsors of the "goat pasture" policy for Germany are beginning to suspect that there is, after all, no little wisdom in the saying: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

A MAN WE CANNOT FORGET

Nineteen centuries after his birth we cannot forget that there once lived in this world a man of the name of Jesus. There is the Christian Church to remind us. There is the art of Michelangelo and the music of Bach. There is an "apostolic succession" that is truly apostolic—a succession of saintly lives down the ages, a magnificent tradition of unselfish devotion and service. There is a civilization influenced to some extent by Christian beliefs and principles. There is our own individual conscience, which to a far greater extent than we realize reflects the teaching and example of Jesus; and the conviction, now widely held, that the things which Jesus Christ stands for—these and these alone—are the things that make for peace.

The wonder expressed in the New Testament appears fully justified in view of the historical result of the coming of Jesus. And how will you account for so amazing a result, if not in terms of the Christian faith that in Jesus of Nazareth the almighty and everlasting God entered into human life with saving power?

CHRISTMAS IN A PRISON CAMP

This faith, if you make it your own, will uphold you in all conditions. Martin Niemœller, in a sermon he was permitted to preach to his fellow prisoners in the notorious Dachau Camp on Christmas Eve, 1944, began by saying: "When Christmas must be celebrated in captivity, it is naturally a rather dismal affair. There is no feast in the course of the year that brings back so many cherished and intimate memories, that awakens in us such strong and deep longings for what has been taken from us." Then, recalling the saying concerning Jesus: "His name shall be called Immanuel, meaning God is with us," he went on to say something like this: We are not alone amidst the horrors of these days cut off though we are from the outside world. We are in the hands of God—the God of Jesus Christ, who, in this dismal and lonely place, is with us men, to save us from our sins, to comfort and uphold us and keep hope alive in our hearts. How very wonderful that such a thing

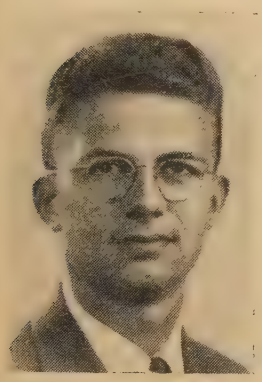
could be said in a concentration camp by a man who had been for eight years behind barbed wire.

We do not know what the future holds for mankind upon earth. But if it be true that in Jesus of Nazareth the eternal God entered into human life, then something beyond man, a superhuman purpose and power, is now at work in the world; and we may be entirely sure that God's purpose of good is ultimately beyond defeat.

The Day After Christmas

A Sermonette by Leslie Conrad, Jr.

THE words "the day after," indicate that something has already happened, leaving you with a let down feeling. For the day after is never as thrilling as "the day before" or "the day itself." Today is "the day after Christmas." If Christmas has been only a *celebration* we need not expect much of an "after" crop. But Christmas should have been more than that. It should have been an *experience.*



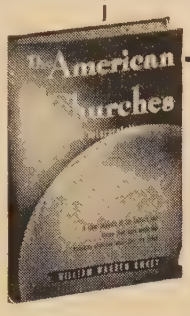
Luke tells us that "after having seen the Christ-child, the shepherds made known abroad" their *experience.* "After having seen," they went out, not to sleep, or back to the hillsides to resume their activity as sheep-watchers, but to become the first Spirit-directed human publicity agents for the greatest event of all—the birth of the Saviour.

Before Christmas, the youngster who has not reached his "teens" is in a happy stew. He finds sleeping difficult, especially on the night before. When Christmas day arrives he is hardly able to contain himself. But the day after Christmas is different. He has acquired a let down feeling. This is to be expected of children but not of adults.

In the first place the "day after" gives us an opportunity to see what we may have missed. In our excitement we may have left out the most important matter of all. Also it gives us the chance to see what mistakes we may have made. Before Christmas we sang: "O how shall I receive Thee, how greet Thee, Lord, aright?" Now is the time to ask: "How did I receive Thee, did I greet Thee, Lord, aright?" Finally, it gives us the opportunity to make plans for observing *next* Christmas as we ought to observe it.

It is said that the white man acts, then talks about what he has done and his heart is sad. The Indian thinks, talks a little, thinks some more. After a long time he acts, and his heart is glad. If the white man had more of this quality of the Indian, he might have more true experiences and fewer celebrations.

To Own . . . To Give



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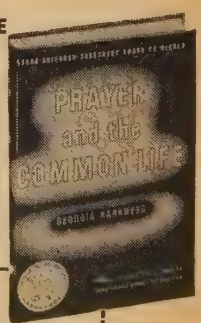

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God So Loved the World

By FRED ZIMMERMAN

Behold, Wise-men from the east come to Jerusalem . . . Matthew 1:2.

THE VISIT of the Wise-men from the east is another precious part of the Christmas story. It is precious because it illustrates, more than any sermon can, the world-wide purpose and effect of Jesus' birth. We are all familiar with the famous passage in the Gospel of John: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever b e l i e v e t h on him should not perish, but have eternal life." The visit of the Wise-men dramatizes t h i s passage. The coming of the Magi from distant eastern lands is proof that God is no respecter of persons but that he sends his Son into the world that the world might be saved through him.

Whatever you choose to emphasize in this passage, you can not get away from the fact that it is into the *world* that God sent his Son. It is the *world* that God loves, not just you and me or our community or our race, but the whole world! It seems apparent that the story of the Wise-men coming to Bethlehem in search of the child Jesus is put into the gospels to emphasize this one supreme fact. God loved the world..

CHRIST CAME FOR ALL PEOPLES

The Wise-men represent every race and every color; every nation and every creed. Christ came to earth for all peoples and not only for the Jews or the Americans. He came for the gentiles and for all foreigners. He came for the Wise-men in distant lands as well as for his chosen people and all men, whoever or wherever they may be, have the same blessed opportunity of receiving his love.

There is nothing quite as marvelous in the entire Bible record. Neither is there anything that we need more to hear in our day than this wonderful message. The Jews in the days of Christ's birth were not aware of the universal quality of God's love and grace. It was not intended (but it turned out that way) that the Jews should have come to regard themselves as the only people capable of receiving the blessings of God. Prophets had proclaimed, teachers had taught and multitudes had heard that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob was the God of the whole world and that his message was for all peoples. To the Hebrews was given the precious responsibility of being the servants of this world-wide message. But the lessons had not been learned. The prophets' words had been forgotten. Israel claimed to be the only people on earth. She despised all others. Gentiles were not permitted in her worship. He who was not a Jew had little chance.

Then Jesus came. He came as a child born in the Jewish town of Bethlehem. He came into the midst of his own people as one of them, and they received him not. They did not acknowledge him as the Christ. As a result they lost their greatest and their last opportunity to be messengers of divine redemption. Their failure proved that they, who thought themselves righteous were but sinners, incapable of receiving the Son of God. They who imagined themselves chosen were rejected.

THE WISE-MEN WORSHIPED

But the Wise-men, contemptible gentiles from the east, traveled from their distant countries, came, and fell down and worshiped. That is a great lesson for our time. Many of us are quite willing glibly to mouth the great pearl of truth found in John 3:16, but we are quite reluctant that it should apply to anyone but ourselves. We are inclined to reserve God's love and richest blessings to a favored few and to believe that we comprise that favored few.

Have you ever thought that most of the sins we are guilty of are those of omission? It is the things we omit to do that weigh so heavily against us—the failure to love or to show affection for others—the failure to help and heal and all of the things that we ought to do but do not do. All of us can look back and quickly count up the opportunities for love and service that we have allowed to slip by—the moments when we could have said or done something to strengthen, raise up and comfort. Instead, too often, we have stood by silently, or closed our eyes and our hearts.

The record of many a life can be written as a record of lost opportunities and our lesson today should remind us of how tragic such a situation is. There is no place in our faith for omitting the service of love. There is no reason that will justify withholding mercy from anyone in the world. When the Wise-men came to honor the Christ-child, they testified to the fact that Jesus came for Jew and gentile alike—that the light which shined in darkness was for all men. Let us not remain indifferent to it. Let us not try to deny it or obstruct it. Let us not refuse the love and service to others that God, himself, did not refuse to us.

We have no claim on the love of God ourselves. There is nothing to prove us better than others. What we hold dear, God may consider cheap and of little value. We need this warning today. In a world which has been set against itself, when one people has fought another people, when hatreds,

suspicions and jealousies continue to divide us, we need to feel the power of God's love for all men. And we must express that power in our love for all men. We dare not judge men for what they are or for what they have been. We are in need as much as other men are—they need our love as much as we need theirs and all of us need the love of God or we shall perish.

There is only one way to find this love and that is the way the Wise-men found it. They searched the skies and having found the star that proclaimed his birth they were willing to be led by it. This does not mean that we have to be star-gazers. It does mean that we have to look for the light and be guided by it. The place to look for the light is in the Word of God. "The Word of God is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." We shall not know the love of God until we have given ourselves to the seeking out of his Word. It must be sought out. It must be searched for and labored at for nothing comes to us in this world without effort, not even the knowledge of truth and grace. But our troubles can find a solution and our complaints can find satisfaction if we are willing to dig into the Word of the Lord.

THE BIBLE IS THE GUIDE

The Bible is a treasure of God's grace. It will yield the fruit of peace and love and joy if its message and insights, its warnings and judgments are searched for and listened to. Of course the Wise-men did not have our Bible. But they had the stars and the teachings of their fathers and they applied all they had to the end of finding the truth of God.

We can do the same. It does not matter how much intelligence, or how much training we have. If we have the heart and the desire of the heart to find the grace of God and the light of God, then we will use whatever is at hand, whatever God has given us, to find it. There again is where many of us commit sins of omission. We know and feel that things are not right, but we fail to apply the tools at hand to correct them. We neglect the weightier things of the spirit and pass by the diligent searching of our hearts for them. Nothing can come of such omission save more hardship and depression. But when we find the light we can do as the Wise-men did, be led by it. They did not consider the star of no importance. They saw it as *the star* the *star of light* and the *star of hope.* They pinned their faith on it and let it lead them.

Need I add more? Once we have seen the light, we must have courage to follow its guidance. Yes, courage, for that is what it takes. To follow may mean casting off all other lights, forgetting about all other things that we had hoped would lead us. It may mean doing things we had never thought of doing and in doing such things we may even find pain and discouragement. But these are small in comparison with the great glory that awaits us. For once having given ourselves to the light of his Word

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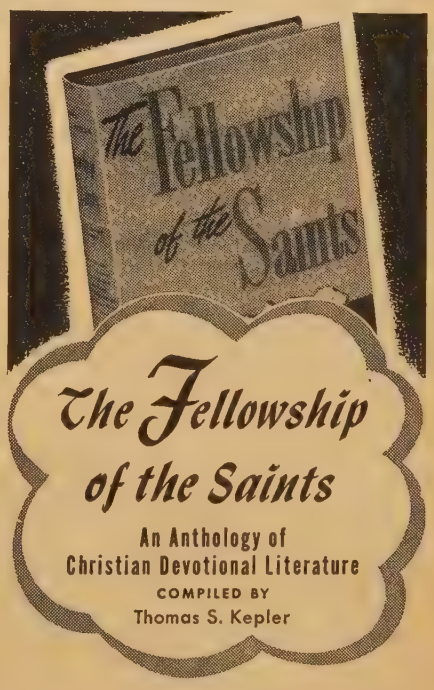
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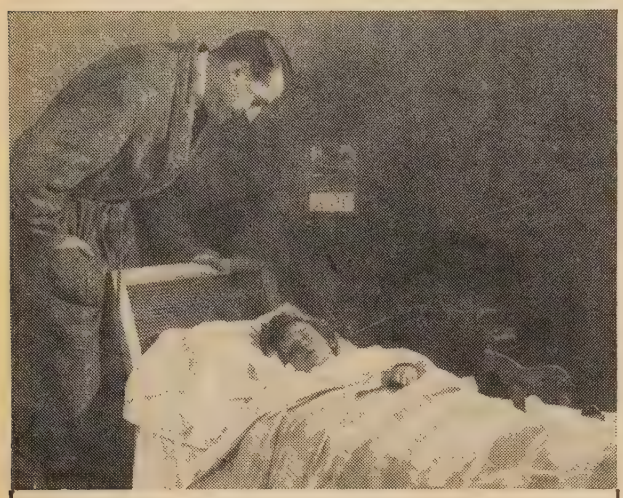

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and once having followed its direction, we shall be led to the heart of the gospel, to Christ himself.

It is by doing these things that the love of God is born in our hearts. By searching for his light and by following it when we see it, we are able to see where the Lord is, in all his glory. We are able at last to worship truly. We are brought into the holy of holies.

Only through such an experience as this can we show forth love to the world. It all fits together. God loved the world and he sent his Son into the world that whosoever believeth—you and me and everyone else—might have eternal life. If we believe this we will know how gracious God is and we will not deny such love to any man, whether Jew or Greek, Roman or barbarian, white or colored, American or Japanese.

What Is Your Name?

A Sermon for Children
By Julius Fischbach

WHAT is your name? Before you answer, let me explain. I am asking a more difficult question than you may think. All of you have at least *three* names. First of all, is your family name, Davis or Scharberg or MacArthur or Eisenhower, and all the members of your family are known by that name. Then there is your given or Christian name. That may be Mary or Sue or Frank. That is the name your mother and father gave you when you where born. But you have still another name and that is the one I am asking for. What is *your* name—the name you have given yourself by your actions and habits of life day after day?

I once knew a girl whose father and mother named her Florence, but her best friends called her "Sunshine". I suppose they called her "Sunshine" because she was so good natured and cheerful all the time that people always thought of sunshine when they saw her.

A BOY NAMED "PIGGY"

I also knew a boy whose parents had named him Roy but all the boys and girls called him "Piggy". You see, if a friend offered Roy some peanuts, he would put his hand deep down into the sack and bring out such a fistfull that very few were left. If you let him take a bite off your apple, he would bite clear to the core. He was always snatching or grabbing something and pushing up front, just like a pig shoving the others aside to get to the trough. So he gave himself that bad name.

Our mothers and fathers usually spend a lot of time thinking about names for a new baby and try to pick the nicest name they can find. Sometimes they name a boy baby for his father or uncle and name a girl baby for her mother or aunt. Sometimes they

choose the name of some famous man or woman whom they admire. They do this because they want their boy or girl to be the very finest sort and they feel that no name is too good.

Then each baby as he grows up begins to make a name for himself. He may be untidy or grouchy or bad tempered and give himself a bad name no matter how nice the name his parents gave him, or he may be thoughful and kindly and industrious and give himself a very fine name indeed. Regardless of what given name a boy or girl may have each one adds his real name which tells about his character.

In Bible times names usually had a meaning and you could often tell just what kind of person one was by his name. If such a man became a different kind of person, then his name would be changed to show that he was changed. You remember the story of Jacob. His name meant: "to take by the heel". You recall how he took advantage of his brother Esau and cheated him out of his birthright and his blessing. Esau became so angry at him that Jacob had to run away from home but he continued to take people "by the heel" and cheated his father-in-law, Laban. Then, after twenty years of absence, he decided to bring all his family back to his old home and just before he reached home a strange thing happened. He wrestled all night long with an invisible wrestler. As he wrestled he thought of all the wrong things he had done and in the end he determined to live for God instead of for self as he had done all these years. Then he learned that his opponent was an angel and he begged for a blessing and got it. He was no longer to be one who takes advantage of others, but one who loves God and serves him. So his name was c h a n g e d from Jacob, "the heel snatcher" to Israel, "Prince of God".

NAMES CAN BE CHANGED

You can probably think of other Bible men whose names were changed. Jesus changed one man's name. It had been Simon. Simon was very undependable. He would blurt out something when he should have been quiet or he would rush up and do something which often turned out to be the wrong thing to do. But Simon was to be a strong, dependable, faithful disciple of Jesus, so Jesus changed his name to Peter, "a rock".

Paul, the great apostle, was a man with a changed name, too. You know his name at first was Saul and he was a persecutor of the Christians. He would search out Chrsitians and put chains on their wrists and take them to prison. He did everything he could to frighten and discourage followers of Christ. Then a great change came over him when he met Christ face to face on the road to Damascus. Forever after that he was Christ's man and became the greatest Christian preacher and leader of all time. So we know him as Paul, the Apostle.

Now I want to ask you again—and you may answer it to yourself rather than say it out loud if you wish: what is your *real* name?

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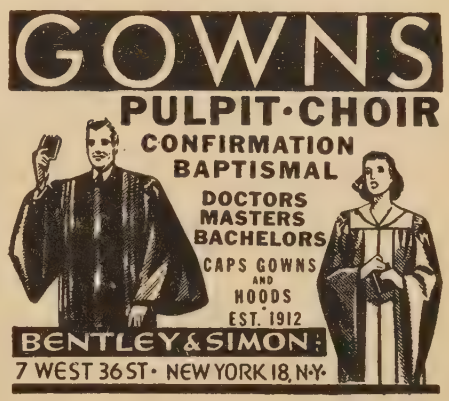

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What Shall We Sing for Christmas?

By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

JUST PRIOR to last year's Christmas a superintendent of public schools in the city of New York raised objections to the use of certain Christmas carols by the pupils attending classes in buildings erected and maintained by his city and state. He was quite willing to hear the children sing "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas," but he professed great concern over the use of such favorites as "Silent Night" and "O come, all ye faithful," on the ground that this constituted a violation of the principle of separation of church and state. Although we can not fully agree with the reasons given by the superintendent for his attitude, the incident contributed to a clarification of our thinking by bringing out into the open the difference in content and caliber between such selections as "Silent Night" and "White Christmas."

The New York school official felt that "O come, all ye faithful" and "Jingle Bells" belonged to two different spheres of life, that they were, in fact, mutually contradictory in their scope and function. His point has considerable merit. It calls attention to the fact that with the growing paganism of the last decades the cleavage between the church's observance of Christmas and the strictly secular celebration of the same day is fast becoming a "great gulf fixed" between the two.

● *Two Kinds of Christmas*

Among us even now Christmas is of two kinds. On the one hand, it is entirely mundane in caliber, concerned at its best with the exchange of gifts, its noblest sentiment being an expression of hope that the day may be happy and "white". This kind of observance is of the here and now, content to congratulate itself on the occasional achievement of turning a Scrooge into a benefactor for the space of twenty-four hours. On the other hand, the church continues to exert her efforts toward reserving the day as an occasion for a "mass of Christ" (Christ*mas*). In the Church the central theme of the day is the story of the birth of the Savior; and its primary activity is that of worshiping the new-born King.

In this latter sense Christmas is a distinctly New Testament festival. Easter and Pentecost have their antecedents in the Old Covenant, but not the Christian Christmas. It is not another version of the Jewish Festival of Lights, which in some years is observed at about the same time, but rather a complete transformation of a Roman festival in honor of "Sol Invictus" into one for worshiping the "Sun of Righteousness". The Christmas observed by the church has nothing in common with the ancient pagan rites except the date. In much the same way, almost the only relationship existing between the secular observance of Christmas in our day and the church's celebration is one of the calendar—unless the exchange of gifts be optimistically interpreted as a remote echo of God's "unspeakable gift" to us! In spirit and in objective the two Christmases are totally different. In fact, in many respects they contradict each other.

A recognition of the difference in essence between the two kinds of Christmas will help us in forming an answer to the question, "What shall we sing for Christmas? What shall be the purpose of our singing?"

If our objective is limited to producing within a given group the spirit of cheer and good will, we need look no farther than, "Deck the hall with gladness," "Jolly old St. Nicholas," "Up on the house-top," "Jingle Bells," and "White Christmas." The tunes and words of these selections are of the kind which will achieve what any good community singing aims to create, namely, a jolly mood in the audience. The results are purely horizontal, rising, at the most, no higher than the chimney down which "St. Nick" is said to make his entree.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

If, however, we are interested in observing Christmas as the anniversary of the birth of the Savior, then we shall find little satisfaction with even the best of secular carols. In fact, their superficiality will clash with the deeper significance of Christmas as the church thinks of that day.

The difference between the two kinds of carols is not one of music primarily. It is one of word and thought content. In other words, the distinction between a secular carol and a Christian one is found in that part of a song which is its most important feature, the words. If we may use an analogy here, it might be said that this is the same kind of clash which exists between a secular Christmas card, on the one hand, and a Christ-centered greeting, on the other. It is not a matter of quality in the paper used but of the sentiment printed on the paper. The comparison stops there, however. It is not fully adequate because in the case of singing carols and hymns one other fact must be kept in mind, namely, that men can not worship in a vacuum. Worship without understanding, without content, is not only unthinkable, it is impossible.

● *Content Is Important*

The Christian carol has content above all else. It is designed to express a basic truth of the Christian religion: that God became man in the person of Jesus, born in Bethlehem, of the Virgin Mary. Where that truth is expressed and believed, there men can worship "in spirit and *in truth.*" Without this content singing for Christmas is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

For that reason the finest kind of Christmas program is often the most simple, using for its materials the various prophecies of the Old Testament and the record of the first twenty verses in the second chapter of Luke and interspersing these with the carols and hymns whose contents are derived from these portions of Holy Writ. We do not need "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas" in our church programs as long as we have available a noble list of Christian carols and hymns such as "A great and mighty wonder," "O gladsome light," "Christians awake, salute the happy morn," "Behold, the great Creator makes," "Hark! The herald angels sing," "Let sighing cease and woe," "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming," "Silent Night," "Away in a manger," "Gloria in excelsis Deo," "O come, all ye faithful," "To Shepherds as they watched their flocks" and "O little town of Bethlehem."

Some of the titles mentioned are those of so-called carols while others have reference to hymns. The difference is almost negligible. Any distinction made between carols and hymns has to do with the quality of the music and with the distance the thought-content is removed from the words of Scripture. By way of illustration, it may be pointed out that "Silent Night"

is usually referred to as a carol and "O come, all ye faithful" is known as a hymn. The latter is more stately in its music. Moreover, it is an expressed invitation to worship the new-born King. "Silent Night," on the other hand recreates a mood, a scene, reflecting the thoughts of the author as he thought upon the significance of the first Christmas.

In all of them, however, whether they be known as carols or hymns, we find that content which is necessary to make possible the worship of the Christ who was born on this day. All of them will help make of a Christmas program an actual worship service in honor of the Prince of Peace.

If I Were a Church Executive

By JAMES H. BELL

HERMAN F. REISSIG'S article, "If I Were a Pastor Again," which appeared in the November Pulpit, has prompted this reply. It is a reply born out of experience in a pastorate in which denominational and interdenominational executives have so often uttered Mr. Reissig's phrase without challenge that I feel compelled to point out a side of the argument those executives have forgotten.

● *The Minister Is a General Practitioner*

In the first place, if I were a church executive, I would remember that the average minister is the general practitioner of the church. He rarely has enough help; he rarely works on a staff large enough to permit him to specialize. As a result he must be "all things to all men." True, this is usually a privilege, and it certainly is the best antidote to boredom and ennui that a man can ask for! But instead of recognizing this, what does the church executive do? He comes into the local church for a few hours or days with some specific problem, emphasis or drive on his mind. He at once begins to "plug" his specific specialty, urging us to drop everything else to make this go or to become proficient in that field. The rest of our minister's practice must go untended—at least for the time being.

In seven years' ministry I have attended schools, institutes or training sessions ranging from one day to four weeks in these fields: Christian education, radio, audio-visual aids, pastoral counselling, recreation and the church and industrial relations. Added to this list are innumerable pastors' schools and conferences. Now there is nothing particularly unique about my list. Others could add to it greatly. But this fact comes out—that in each of these institutes or schools, the minister was urged to become a specialist in some field because of its urgency or its immediate bearing on people's lives or on the Kingdom of God. Of course all of these emphases are important! How can we hope to make Christ supreme in human life unless we use every technique possible and unless we appeal to the whole man? Yet never once that I recall was I helped to build this particular emphasis into my work as a general practitioner. Instead I was usually advised to dwell upon this or that particular phase of the ministry to the detriment of some other.

So if I were a church executive, I would try to remember that although a little knowledge may be a dangerous thing it is still practically inevitable for the average pastor. He must know a little about a lot of fields and do his level best not to ignore any of them. Therefore I wouldn't come into a local parish set up and make one particular field or aspect of the ministry look so important that I would lead a minister to forsake his other work.

Then, too, if I were a church executive, I would try to remember the constant frustration of the parish ministry. There probably isn't a single minister anywhere who doesn't feel constantly that he ought to be accomplishing far more than he is. This claim for his time and that demand on his attention keep crowding in so constantly that he is blessed with a permanent sense of inadequacy. The more drives that are added to denominational programs and to interchurch cooperative enterprises, the more specialties which come to the minister's attention, the more he senses the fact that he isn't doing what he ought.

● *Executives Should Help the Pastor*

There are two things to be said about this. In the first place, such a sense of inadequacy keeps the minister humble in a job which too often feeds his ego. And the other is that the pastor doesn't have a monopoly on being busy. There aren't enough hours in the day for most of the minister's parishoners either. The executive ought to help the minister to ease that crowding sense of frustration instead of adding to it as he so often does. Instead of piling on ever increasing burdens of drives, committees and organizational emphases, the executive ought to remember the feeling of inadequacy the minister has and help him to overcome it. At least that is what I would try to do if I were an executive.

Finally, if I were a church executive, I think I would never say, "If I were a pastor again." That refrain is probably as often repeated as any, and as little convincing. Granted that you and I don't know the reasons why a man should leave the pastorate and go into executive work, let us also admit that the pastor's unspoken response to the refrain too often is, "But you did leave the pastorate, didn't you? You were a pastor and now aren't." The reasons are manifold — larger opportunity, wider horizons, larger pay (although this very often is not true), removal from the petty carpings of narrow-minded lay people, and so forth. The reasons are good. But we still feel that if we need advice, which we do, we want it from some person who faces the same problems we do and is not once removed from them. Maybe that isn't fair. But the fact remains that we look up to the man who is still in the parish ministry, who has faced a tough situation and has conquered it, who is right down in the arena of local church work and has come forth with some valid answers. Do you remember the definition of advice? It is what an old man offers a young man when he can no longer set him a bad example. Well, we want our advice straight from the center ring of the circus of church affairs, and we want it from someone who has been there.

● *Ministers Need Encouragement*

Now right away I can hear the executives—I'm not uncharitable to them—remind us, as they always do, that they once had "a church this size." And doubtless they were tapped on the shouder to become executives because they were successful ministers in the finest sense. But the suspicion still lingers, even though mistakenly, that the executive gets his answers out of the book, and we want ours from life.

So if I were an executive, I would give pastors encouragement but precious little advice unless it was earnestly sought for. I would make available to them the latest and best tools of their trade. I would make it easier for them to put into practice the things they already know. I would try to be a sympathetic brother whose function was to share the burden instead of an oracle whose main emphasis was efficiency.

The Shepherds Returned

Martin Luther was once commenting on the Christmas story and came to the word about the shepherds who, after seeing the babe in Bethlehem, *returned.* "Oh, that must be wrong," he exclaimed. "Surely we should read that they shaved their heads, put on cowls and went into monastaries. But no, we read that they returned. Where to did they return? They returned to their sheep, and a good thing for their sheep that they did."—*Roland H. Bainton, Yale Divinity School.*

Sermon Illustrations

THERE are many examples of lost opportunities in the Bible. One notable one is that of Felix, the governor of Judea, before whom Paul was brought. Felix was a peculiar man. Paul made his defense and the governor was moved. He was so moved that he had Paul speak with him daily. He enjoyed hearing this ambassador of Christ. But he made no effort to obey the gospel injunctions. We all agree that Felix missed a chance, a golden chance. He had the opportunity of becoming a Christian while hearing Paul daily for almost two years. But he let his opportunity fizzle out. He delayed making a decision. Finally, personal ambition and selfish concern ruled over him and the door was closed.—*Fred Zimmerman, St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church, Powhatan Point, Ohio.*

● *Growing Under Difficulties*

Once, while driving across the state I saw a tree that had grown up through a huge boulder. At closer range I did see a narrow cleft in the rock but it was not wide enough to give the tree much cause for optimism. "How could the tree manage it?" I thought. If that tree could talk and give expression to sentient experience, might it not recall for us dark days, days when it hated the rock, grew discouraged with its own shortcomings and yearned for escape from growth? As I looked upon it there, healthy and full-leafed under the summer sun, I could not help but think it might now congratulate itself that it had arrived at this happy day of mature growth through a proper management of its memories.—*Arnold Allan Brown, The Community Church, Durham, N.H.*

● *An Act of True Forgiveness*

In John Bojer's noteworthy Norwegian novel, *The Great Hunger,* Peter Holm is the principle character. He lost his wealth and position. He became a blacksmith and eked out a bare existence. Two of his children were sent to live with a relative, that they might have a chance to go to school. One night Peter's neighbor let loose a wolf-dog that killed his only other child.

It was a year of famine. Peter knew that his neighbor's field was bare because of a late frost. Everything planted there had been killed. But Peter Holm had a half bushel of barley. Early one morning we see him rise, go to his bin, gather the grain into a container and, crossing his neighbor's field, sow it there. His wife, who had thrown a shawl about her shoulders and followed him, watches this act of forgiveness with joy.

"Standing upon the ruins of my life," he says, "I felt a vast responsibility. Mankind must arise and be better than the blind powers that order its way; in the midst of its sorrow it must take heed that the godlike does not die!" —*Arnold Allan Brown, The Community Church, Durham, N.H.*

● *Human Beings Can Stop*

The other animals and humans are alike in may ways. Both can understand impossibilities and prohibitions. Confronted by an impossibility in life, like a red light, both animals and humans can wait until the impossibility is removed. But from there on the humans have a better birthright. Animals go ahead when the impossibility is removed—when the red light changes to green. Human beings have the ability to hold back, even when the green light is shown, and consider other factors that make it advisable to delay action. For instance, monkeys can be taught to drive a car, observing stop signals and all, with this one difference from human drivers of cars: the monkey will stop for a red light but he will go ahead on the green whether or not there is someone standing in front of the car or whether others cars are coming from the sides.—*Robert S. Lederman, Calvary Church, Listowel, Ontario.*

● *A Lesson for the Churches*

A few weeks ago I was fishing in southwestern Colorado. Near a point where a river flows into the lake where I was fishing, I was plying my flyrod. Another fisherman, an old gentleman, occupied a spot near me at the very edge of the stream. Moving, in an attempt to improve his position, he suddenly sank waist deep into treacherous quicksand. I rushed quickly to his side and, being careful to avoid the quicksand myself, gave him my hand. I tugged and pulled with all the strength I possessed, but to no avail. When I discovered he was not sinking too rapidly I began to carry all available timbers, washed down by the stream, to his side to avert his sinking deeper. This done, I called loudly for help. A fisherman some distance away heard the call and immediately sensed the tragic situation. He commandeered a boat and rowed with all possible speed to the man's side. Then as the sinking fisherman used all his waning strength and the two of us pulled with all our might, our combined efforts finally saved the hapless stranger from a terrible death. Do you know, my friends, of any more apt illustration of the plight of our world or of what it needs? — *R. C. Snodgrass, First Christian Church, Amarillo, Texas — in The Christian Evangelist.*

● *The Piano of Beethoven*

An American girl tourist visited the museum in Vienna where there is exhibited a piano once used by Beethoven. She walked casually toward it and struck off some "boogey-woogey." Turning to the attendant she asked whether there had not been great pianists to inspect the instrument. She was informed that a short time before the great Paderewski had seen it.

"Paderewski," she exclaimed. "Surely he must have played something beautiful on this old instrument." "On the contrary," the attendant replied, "he did not feel worthy of touching it."—*Melvin E. Wheatley, Central Methodist Church, Stockton, Calif.*

Speaking Of Sermons—

EVERY SO OFTEN we get a letter in which a minister says: "I don't know how you select the sermons for your magazine but I am sending you the enclosed manuscript for your consideration just in case you do accept unsolicited manuscripts." Now let it be known that the un-asked-for sermon is always welcome. We may have to send it back to you for no better reason than that we simply do not have room enough to print all the good sermons that come our way—or we may keep it around for months in the hopes that we can crowd it into a publication schedule already full—or we may use it in this column, but in any case your sermons are welcome.

The same policy holds for the "preacher problem" articles. As James H. Bell says in his article in this issue, ministers like to get advice from men who are working with them in the field of the pastoral ministry. If you have something to offer in the way of an article—send it along. And, speaking of illustrations—we can always use good ones.

And now, *speaking of sermons,* here is one by Hugh Stevenson Tignor of

Mount Vernon Heights Congregational Church, Mount Vernon, New York, on "The Grace of the Forward Look." It is based on the text, Philippians 3:13-15 (I press on toward the goal for the prize, etc.), and starts with Paul as the prime example of one who might have been expected to be bitter and resentful—chafing under his persecution but who, instead, had the grace to look ahead.

Paul writes like a youth, says Dr. Tignor, who looks at his past only as a prelude to the main events of life. "This grace of the forward look," he says, "is one of the marks of the grown-up Christian, one of the fruits of the Christian faith." It is a maturity which he again shows in I Cor. 13:11 and is a quality not easily attained. "How easily childish traits can remain with the adult; how hard it is to become genuinely mature . . . Some people cannot let bygones be bygones." Never-theless we must be like the children of Israel, who though they had to be prodded to do so by Moses, did turn their backs on the familiar places of Edom and turn north.

"Living is actually an adventure, an ongoing process in which no man knows what he will meet around the next bend in the road." Instead of balking at the way time carries us and all things away we must learn to trust the process of life whereby we are swept onward as a swimmer learns to commit himself to the water. Life is a process which takes us onward to the goal that lies in God.

The sermon concludes with the following dual quotation: " 'Our home,' said Thomas Wolfe, 'lies in the future.' 'Our commonwealth,' said Paul, 'is in heaven and from it we await a Saviour.' Let us get on with the business, ahead."

● *On Managing Our Memories*

A sermon with a different slant on the same text is by Arnold Allan Brown, whose two illustrations appear in this issue. It bears the title "On Managing Our Memories." "Happy is the person," says this preacher who is pastor of the Community Church in Durham, N. H., "who is not afraid of the past so that whether he meets it at noonday or midnight he may still face it with a smile, shake hands with vigor and say, 'I'm glad to see you.' "

His chief illustration is that same Apostle, awaiting his doom in his Roman dungeon with a mood of confidence, affection and enthusiasm. He is reviewing things past. "Mistaken judgements? Many of them. Ruthless deeds? Many of them. Regrets at the impending doom and the limits set to the good that he now may do? Yes." But in this letter to the Philippians he shows "the reasoning of a good man who has made peace with his past and has learned how to manage his memories."

Some people can never forget an ancient wrong but carry it with them through life, returning to its haunts a thousand times a year. That festers. That poisons. That robs life of its effectiveness. So make peace with your grievances—forgive and forget and be at peace with all men.

Also we must manage our memories of disappointment, the recollection of our personal shortcomings and all others which tend to obliterate the presence of God from our lives. We will remember, of course, for we cannot blot out the recollection of all our sins, but we must manage those memories so that we have no fear of the past but are able to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God."

● *A Continuing Incarnation*

Finally, here is a sermon by James Hamilton Lash of Hollywood, California. Based on John 1:14, it states its thesis that God, writing in the pages of history has always "written in the flesh of man." It is an eternal process that began in the garden of Eden and continues today.

The history of our nation is a chronicle of those in whom the Word of God was incarnate in one form or another. Patrick Henry, with his whole being on fire for freedom and Abraham Lincoln, who gave new meaning to the same Word by striking the shackles from the limbs of four million slaves, are examples. In music and in the drama as well as in other forms of art, life comes alive and the Word becomes incarnate.

Dr. Lash takes issue with the dictionary definition of a Christian which is as follows: "one who believes in Christ, one born in a Christian country or of Christian parents, a decent, civilized, respectable person . . . a human being as distinguished from the lower animals." "There is nothing," he says, "in this definition about incarnating Christ-like qualities." And "there is nothing more important that can happen to the people of this generation than to be God incarnated."

There *must* be continual incarnation. Without it even God himself cannot do his work any more than he can make Stradivarius violins without Antonio . . . or have a Salvation Army without a General Booth. And it is only in this continual incarnation of the Christ-like spirit in men that we see real hope for the world.

"From that first group of disciples Jesus gathered about him, down through the intervening centuries there has been a succession of God incarnated personalities who have given meaning, purpose and power to the Christian message. What they have done in their generations we must do in ours." G. H. B.

A Pastoral Prayer

By HERBERT W. HAHN

ETERNAL GOD, who art the hope of all the ends of the earth, the creator and sustainer of all things and the giver of every good and perfect gift, we praise thee, we worship thee, we magnify thy holy name. We bless thee for thy goodness and mercy which have followed us all our days, and for thine unfailing grace which is ever new as the morning.

Our faith looks up to thee. We desire thy divine guidance that we may walk in right paths. Teach us thy laws and thy statutes that we may follow them, and do the things that are well pleasing in thy sight. May thy ways be known upon the earth, and thy saving health among all nations.

Thou hast made the earth, and given it to us; and thou hast provided the resources for abundance. Enable us, we beseech thee, to use these resources for the common good and share them with all mankind. May we acknowledge thee as the source of our blessings, and show our gratitude for thy favors.

Bless all who labor and toil. Be with those who plow the fields, sow the seed and reap the crops. Grant unto them a bountiful harvest. May those who work in factory, mine, mill and industry receive a just reward for their labors. May those who faithfully work in the home, office, class-room and business be blessed with the fruits of their labors.

We pray for those who have been entrusted with the responsibilities of government, and for those who represent us in the council of nations. Give unto them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and so rule their hearts and bless their endeavors that they may establish law and order, and work for justice and peace in all the earth.

Help us all to be co-workers with thee in building a fairer world. As thou in the beginning didst bring light out of darkness, and order out of chaos, so help us, by overcoming evil with good, to bring harmony out of discord, and enduring peace and good will out of enmity, strife and war; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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"As usual, the last issue was very satisfactory. We wish that you would inform those workmen who are directly responsible for its appearance how much we appreciate their craftsmanship with ink, paper, and type."—Rev. Clement A. Lynch, Brooklyn, New York.

"I want to express my appreciation for the splendid workmanship on the last issue of the Westview Messenger. Our congregation is well pleased with the magazine. You have given us a grand job and we appreciate your splendid service."—Rev. Horace Hilton, Chattanooga, Tenn.

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